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Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

In the Matter of)
)
1998 Biennial Regulatory Review --) ET Docket No. 98-80
Conducted Emissions Limits Below)
30 MHz for Equipment Regulated Under)
Parts 15 and 18 of the Commission's)
Rules)

To: The Commission

COMMENTS OF THE
CONSUMER ELECTRONICS ASSOCIATION

The Consumer Electronics Association ("CEA"),¹ pursuant to Section 1.415 of the Commission's Rules, 47 C.F.R. § 1.415, hereby respectfully submits its comments in response to the above-captioned Notice of Proposed Rule Making ("NPRM").² In the NPRM, the Commission proposes to amend Parts 15 and 18 of its rules to revise the limits on the amount of radio frequency ("RF") energy that is permitted to be conducted onto the AC power lines. The purpose of these limits is to protect against interference to radio services operating below 30 MHz. As the NPRM notes, the conducted emissions limits apply to a wide variety of products, including various consumer electronic devices and radio transmitters.³

¹ The Consumer Electronics Association was formerly known as the Consumer Electronics Manufacturers Association ("CEMA").

² See *In the Matter of 1998 Biennial Regulatory Review – Conducted Emissions Limits Below 30 MHz for Equipment Regulated Under Parts 15 and 18 of the Commission's Rules*, ET Docket No. 98-80, Notice of Proposed Rule Making, FCC 99-296 (rel. Oct. 18, 1999) ("NPRM"), 64 Fed. Reg. 62159 (Nov. 16, 1999).

³ NPRM at ¶ 1.

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I. STATEMENT OF INTEREST

CEA, a sector of the Electronics Industries Alliance, is the principal trade association of the consumer electronics industry. CEA members design, manufacture, distribute, and sell a wide variety of consumer electronics equipment that spans the audio, video, mobile electronics, communications, information technology, integrated home systems, and accessories markets. Its membership includes most major manufacturers of consumer electronics products as well as small companies that design, produce, distribute and service consumer electronics products. Because many consumer electronics devices will be affected by the proposed rule changes, CEA has an interest in the outcome of this proceeding.

II. CEA AGREES WITH THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL TO HARMONIZE ITS STANDARDS ON CONDUCTED EMISSION LIMITS WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS.

As an initial matter, CEA agrees with any rule changes that serve to reduce the regulatory burdens of the Commission's Parts 15 and 18 rules and the costs associated with complying with those rules. Specifically, CEA agrees with the Commission's proposal to amend the conducted emission limits to make them generally consistent with international standards developed by the International Electrotechnical Commission ("IEC"), International Special Committee on Radio Interference ("CISPR").⁴ The Commission proposes to adopt the international CISPR limits in place of the current FCC conducted emission standards. CEA agrees with the Commission's view that developing consistency with the international standards will promote a global marketplace that will help reduce costs for manufacturers and consumers.⁵ Furthermore,

⁴ *Id.* at ¶¶ 1, 7.

⁵ *Id.* at ¶ 7.

adoption of an internationally-recognized emission standard can promote trade and competition and can improve economies of scale, reducing product and testing costs.

III. A REASONABLE TRANSITION PERIOD FOR COMPLYING WITH REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO NEW CONDUCTED EMISSIONS LIMITS IS THREE YEARS.

CEA strongly urges the Commission to establish a transition period that will provide manufacturers sufficient time necessary to achieve compliance, while minimizing costs and design disruptions. In CEA's view, the Commission's proposal to require that any new regulations stemming from the NPRM become effective after only one year from the date of publication of the Report and Order in the Federal Register is unreasonable.⁶ Requiring affected products to comply with the proposed new rules after only one year from the effective date of the Report and Order would be burdensome to manufacturers and consumers, in terms of cost and the abrupt design/redesign of products.

CEA recommends that compliance with any new regulations not become effective for at least three years after the effective date of the Report and Order. Furthermore, products which have already been qualified under current requirements in Part 15 of the Commission's Rules should be exempted from compliance with the new limits. CEA firmly believes that a three-year transition period serves to achieve a reasonable balance between the Commission's desire to harmonize its standard on conducted emission limits with international standards and manufacturers' desire to achieve compliance at minimal cost and minimal disruption to product design. A three-year transition period would be sufficient to accommodate most design, testing,

⁶ See *id.* at ¶ 34.

and production schedules, and will also serve to provide a smooth transition for product introduction to the market that complies with any new regulatory requirements.

The foregoing view is consistent with the Commission's previous statement regarding its regulations on conducted emissions: "While the purpose of our regulations pertaining to conducted emissions is to control interference, we seek to accomplish this objective at minimal cost."⁷ Indeed, manufacturers will have to incur cost associated with complying with the CISPR standard, and more so if it is forced to comply with the new requirements in a shorter time period. As the Commission is aware, the techniques for achieving compliance with the conducted emissions requirements is accomplished through use of RF filtering. The costs of the filtering are therefore a direct cost of the regulations. Still, there are additional costs, such as the need to design the product to comply with the emissions limits and to test the product to determine whether it complies with the standard. The time necessary to complete design/redesign and testing of products, given their volume, simply cannot be accomplished within a one-year period, in order to comply with new regulatory requirements. Given the foregoing concerns, CEA urges the Commission to afford manufacturers the flexibility of a three-year period within which to accomplish the Commission's objective of conformity with international standards at minimal cost and product disruption, and to exempt products which have already been qualified under current requirements in Part 15 of the Commission's Rules from compliance with the new limits.

⁷ *In the Matter of 1998 Biennial Regulatory Review – Conducted Emissions Limits Below 30 MHz for Equipment Regulated Under Parts 15 and 18 of the Commission's Rules*, ET Docket No. 98-80, Notice of Inquiry, FCC 98-102, at ¶ 12 (rel. June 8, 1998).

IV. CONCLUSION

For the reasons stated in the foregoing, CEA urges the Commission to ensure that any amendments to its Parts 15 and 18 Rules are consistent with the comments expressed by CEA herein.

Respectfully submitted,

CONSUMER ELECTRONICS ASSOCIATION

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